SPORTS

Winchester Youth Baseball U-12 all-stars advance to the EMass finals after dominating pool play, sectionals

JOE MCCONNELL | SPORTS EDITOR

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Winchester Youth Baseball U-12 all-star team is on its way to Branson, Mo. to participate in the 2025 Cal Ripken World Series. COURTESY PHOTO/CAL RIPKEN BASEBALL

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It's been a relatively smooth start for the Winchester Youth Baseball U-12 all-star team in its journey to Branson, Mo. to participate in the Cal Ripken World Series. They had already qualified for the August extravaganza after participating in it two years ago.

But the Winchester entry began this summer's trek by coming out of pool play last weekend unscathed with three straight dominating wins against their District 7 peers. They then won two more in the state sectionals to advance to the EMass finals, which begin on July 5. Freetown / Lakeville youth baseball is hosting this year's state finals on this side of the Pike.

During pool play, Winchester, after winning all three games in Pool N, had a run differential of 28, while only allowing the opposition to score three combined runs. Arlington was second with a 2-1 record. Its run differential was four after giving up 12 runs. Burlington (1-2 record, a run differential of -4, 20 runs allowed) and Medford (0-3 record, a run differential of -28, 39 runs allowed) rounded out this pool of teams.

Both Winchester and Arlington had since moved on to the sectionals. Natick (3-0, a run differential of 26, eight runs allowed) and Concord-Carlisle (2-1, a run differential of 13, 19 runs allowed), the top two teams in Pool A, comprised the other sectional squads. Revere (1-2, a run differential of -16, 35 runs allowed) and Marblehead (0-3, a run differential of -23, 42 runs allowed) were the other two teams in that pool.

In the sectional opener on June 23, Coach Chris Gannon's team defeated Concord-Carlisle at Nutile Field, 12-2. The game was eventually halted in the fifth inning, because of the mercy rule. After Arlington clipped Natick in the other first round sectional contest, 3-1 at Wellesley's Hunnewell Field, a Pool N rematch was set to take place.

Morgan Sweeney pitched all five innings against the Junior Patri
Concord-Carlisle to secure the win. He allowed two hits, zero walks and

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two runs, none earned, while striking out eight.

Tommy Vittiglio was the team's offensive leader after coming up with two singles and a homerun that resulted in three RBI. Altogether, the team produced 12 hits.

Kellan Stachelski was credited with a single and a double, driving home one run. Cooper Statires collected two singles and three RBI. Bryce Shaw (1 RBI), Pete Toner (1 RBI), Vincent Moran (1 RBI), Callan Gannon and Sweeney (1 RBI) each singled once.

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There was no rest for the weary as the Winchester stars were back at Nutile the very next night to take on Arlington once again, but it was a much closer encounter than the first time around, when they shutout host Arlington in pool play on June 20, 11-0. But on June 24, this time at home, they came back to double up the Junior Spy Ponders, 8-4 to advance to the EMass regional tournament.

Moran pitched the first three innings against Arlington, yielding six hits, one walk and four runs, one earned. He fanned four. Toner went the final three, issuing one hit and two walks centered around three strikeouts.

The Winchester offense banged out seven hits. Shaw helped power the attack with a single and a homerun to account for four RBI. Vittiglio also came through with a round tripper. Toner walked three times and scored three runs. Gannan walked with the bases loaded to produce another run. Moran contributed two singles and a walk to the winning cause. Ayla Capone singled in a run. Cooper Statires chipped in with a base hit. Sweeney garnered two walks and one RBI.

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Pool play highlights

The 2025 Cal Ripken District 7 summer tournament season began with a familiar refrain, and it all centered around the Winchester U-12 stars. Most of this team have been playing together since 2022. They lost just four tournament games combined throughout the last three summers, and that streak of winning continued last weekend, when they beat up on Arlington (11-0), Burlington (14-1) and Medford (10-2) in pool play.

The tournament opener against host Arlington was stopped after four innings, because of the mercy rule. Winchester scored four runs in the first, three more in the second and another four in the third to shutout the home team, 11-0.

Chris Fiore pitched all four innings, giving up just one hit and two walks. He ended up fanning six. The offense sprayed 10 hits around the field, including doubles by Vittiglio (3 RBI), Shaw (2 RBI) and Fiore (2 RBI). Vittiglio and Shaw also singled once. Stachelski (1 RBI) led the doubles parade with two. Toner, Gannon and Sweeney each singled once.

The Winchester stars then came home for a Saturday night game against Burlington, and after staking the visitors to a 1-0 lead in the top of the first, they took control of what turned out to be another four-inning mercy rule game with four runs in the home half. They scored five each in the next two frames to wrap up victory number two.

Moran (4 hits, 1 earned run, 4 strikeouts) and Sweeney (1 hit, 6 strikeouts) pitched two innings apiece for the Winchester juggernaut against Burlington. The offense banged out seven singles from the likes of Jack Doherty (1 RBI), Stachelski (1 RBI), Vittiglio, Shaw (1 RBI), Moran (2 RBI), Sweeney (3 RBI) and Capone. Cooper Statires (2 RBI) and Toner (1 RBI) also knocked in runs.

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The Medford game actually took six innings to complete the next night on June 22, also at home. But the final results were just as dominating. Single runs by Winchester in the first two innings led to three in the third and four more in the fourth to break it open. They added the 10th run in the fifth.

Medford took a 1-0 lead in the top of the first, but the home team tied it up quickly when they came to the plate. Callan Gannon supplied the big hit with a single down the leftfield line that helped his teammates even the score after one.

Ben Albiani knocked in the go-ahead run in the second on a groundout. Vincent Moran's double, followed by a single from Capone contributed to the three-run third inning by the Winchester crew.

Gannon picked up the win on the mound after pitching two no-hit innings. He fanned five, and walked just one. The lone Medford run off him was unearned. Toner pitched the next two frames, issuing one hit, but no walks. He ended up striking out four.

Capone and Moran paced the offensive attack with two hits and two RBI apiece. Albiani also knocked in two runs.

After pretty much dominating all five pool play and sectional games, the Winchester stars now move to the EMass regionals set to begin again on July 5 at the home of the Freetown / Lakeville youth baseball organization. It will conclude on July 13.

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Winchester boys basketball heads to Bridgewater-Raynham for Sweet 16 game after beating Lexington in postseason opener

It was the third meeting this year between Middlesex League boys basketball rivals Lexington (16-5, 11th seed) and Winchester (17-4, 22nd seed). They split the first two during the regular season, thus making this Round of 32 postseason matchup the impromptu rubber game of this year's series, with the

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Winchester wrestling enjoys Top 10 finish at state divisional meet; senior captains move on to All-States

After the Winchester High qualified wrestlers competed hard over two days last weekend (Feb. 20, 21) in the State Division 1 Meet at North Andover High School, Mother Nature gave them a break to rest and recuperate with Monday's blizzard that resulted in two days off from school. There

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Winchester boys hockey advances to the Sweet 16 after beating Wachusett in the tournament opener

The Winchester High boys hockey team (12-9-2), the 17th seed, edged the 16th-seeded Wachusett Regional Mountaineers (18-2-1), 5-4 in a Round of 32 Division 1 state tournament game at Westborough's Northstar Ice Arena on Feb. 25. The Red & Black will now take on top seed Catholic Memorial (18-2-1)

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With postseason starting Friday night, WHS boys hoop seniors English, Sarpong, Burbine join Middlesex League elite

The Winchester High boys basketball team, the 22nd seed, will take on Middlesex League rival Lexington, the 11th seed, to begin the Division 1 state tournament in the Round of 32 on Friday night, Feb. 27, starting at 6 p.m. These teams are so evenly matched, beginning with the

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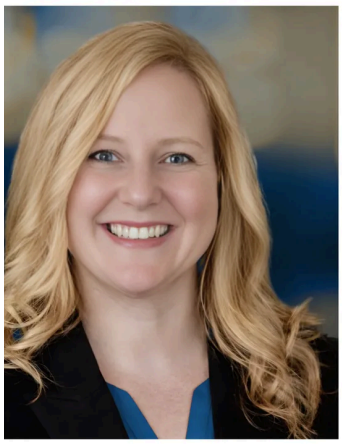

NEWS

Winchester School Committee candidates bring contrasting backgrounds to Thursday forum

Two candidates for Winchester's School Committee will face voters at a forum as the district navigates a new literacy curriculum, budget pressures and questions about student mental health. Heather von Mering and John Bellaire are competing for an open seat on the School Committee, which oversees a budget von

FEATURES

'Chicago: Teen Edition' dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents "Chicago: Teen Edition," a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. Set in [illegible] iconic production is sure to [illegible] audience wanting more. Performances will

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EVENTS

Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents 'Syldason: You Are Welcome Here'

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

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NEWS

Rep. Michael Day helps House colleagues pass sweeping energy affordability bill

The following was submitted by the Office of Rep. Michael S. Day: Rep. Michael S. Day and his colleagues in the House of Representatives recently passed energy affordability legislation that would result in over $9 billion in savings for utility ratepayers over the next 10 years. The bill maintains critical

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